

FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL

POLICY MANUAL



SUBJECT
COMMUNICATIONS

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14.01.01 PURPOSE

To promulgate regulations and procedures governing radio communications within the Division of Florida Highway Patrol, with other law enforcement outside the agency, and the general motoring public. Effective and efficient law enforcement communications enhance officer safety, present meaningful communications within the Patrol, with other agencies, and the motoring public.

14.01.02 POLICY

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to provide effective oral and written communications at all times to all necessary agency personnel and other law enforcement agencies in a clear and concise manner. The Division has 24-hour two-way radio capability providing continuous communications between the communication centers, patrol officers on duty and other law enforcement agencies

14.01.01 DEFINITIONS

- A. **REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (RCC)** - There are seven Regional Communication Centers. The Troop Commander responsible for the geographic area in which the center is located oversees each regional communications center. Each Regional Communications Center is commanded by a Captain and is staffed by Shift Commanders holding the rank of lieutenant and civilian duty officer supervisors and duty officers. Regional Communication centers are responsible for dispatching all state law enforcement officers whose agency is participating in the joint dispatch project.
- B. **REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER COMMANDER** – Captain
- C. **TROOP SHIFT COMMANDER** – Lieutenant
- D. **DUTY OFFICER SUPERVISOR** – Non-sworn communications supervisor
- E. **DUTY OFFICER** – Non-sworn communications personnel assigned to Regional Communication Centers

14.01.03 OBJECTIVES

- A. To formulate and disseminate written policy and procedures relating to effective

oral and accurate radio communications.

- B. To specify procedures concerning documentation, as required, of all communications.

14.01.04 RESPONSIBILITIES

A. TROOP COMMANDERS

Troop Commanders that have a Regional Communications Center under their command are responsible for ensuring that a Shift Commander is scheduled for duty at all times.

1. The Troop Commander may supplement designated Shift Commander Staff by assigning a District Lieutenant, District Sergeant or Reserve member holding the rank of Lieutenant or above to perform the duties of a Shift Commander based on unexpected or critical staffing needs.

B. REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER COMMANDERS

A member holding the rank of Captain shall command each regional communications center.

1. The Regional Communications Center Commander is responsible for the effective operation of the communications center.
2. The Regional Communications Center Commander shall establish a schedule to ensure Shift Commander coverage on a twenty-four hour basis in the RCC.
3. The Regional Communications Center Commander shall ensure all Shift Commander's are properly trained.

C. SHIFT COMMANDERS

Shift Commanders will perform the following duties:

1. Manage the operation of the shift, including command oversight and administration of non-sworn communications center personnel and sworn personnel operating within the Regional Communication Center's area of responsibility.
2. The Shift Commander will not generally perform direct supervisory duties normally afforded to a District Lieutenant, but will coordinate their efforts through the appropriate District's Command Staff. However, in the event that a District Commander and District Lieutenant are unavailable, the Shift Commander shall assume the supervisory duties and authority of the District Lieutenant until otherwise relieved.
3. Monitor the appropriateness of zone assignments and provide for zone coverage in the event a zone is vacated, in consultation with on-duty district supervisory personnel.

4. Monitor communications between patrol officers and the communications center and ensure proper radio procedures by both sworn and non-sworn members.
5. Coordinate the order of dispatch of calls for service during critical time periods and when the number of calls for service exceeds the number of available units.
6. Coordinate assistance between districts when the need arises.
7. Manage critical incidents to ensure proper and effective response by zone units, supervisors and other emergency service agencies when requested by the FHP according to the procedures listed in 17.14.05.B.
8. Provide timely notification to appropriate command staff concerning significant and/or newsworthy incidents.
9. Perform limited public information duties as outlined in 17.14.05.C.
10. Ensure completion of Press Releases, Briefing Reports, and Shift Commander Logs as outlined in 17.14.05.C, D, and E.
11. Provide required command oversight and administration for all other State Law Enforcement Agencies covered under any Joint Dispatch agreements currently in force as outlined in 17.14.05.I.

D. SWORN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND NON-SWORN PERSONNEL

In the absence of on-duty District supervision, all subordinate personnel shall follow the orders of Shift Commander as required under Florida Highway Patrol Policy 3.03.06.A.

E. Duty Officer Supervisors are responsible for:

1. Direct supervision of duty officers.
2. Ensuring that Regional Communications Center operations are conducted in compliance with all Department and Division policies and procedures, FCIC/NCIC rules and FCC rules.
3. Ensuring that the geographic location (GEO), personnel, and other files on the Communication Center's CAD system contain current information and are up dated in a timely manner.

14.01.05 PROCEDURES

**A. FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION RULES AND REGULATIONS-
USE OF RADIO**

1. All Patrol radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rules and Regulations. The Patrol is authorized to transmit communications relative to public safety, the protection of life and property and communications essential to Patrol

activities. False calls, false or fraudulent distress signals; superfluous, unidentified communications, obscene, indecent and profane language are prohibited.

2. Communications personnel shall promptly answer all calls on the State Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS), Mutual Aid and Florida Interoperability Network (FIN) in a professional law enforcement and business like manner using proper communications procedures.

B. IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. There are seven Regional Communication Centers located in:

Tallahassee (TRCC), Jacksonville (JRCC), Orlando (ORCC), Tampa (TBRCC), Ft. Myers (FMRCC), Miami (MRCC), and Lake Worth (LWRCC). Each Regional Communications Center shall be identified by the name of the city where they are located. Members and non-sworn employees assigned to a vehicle will be identified by their assigned identification number during radio communications.
2. Employees not regularly assigned vehicles will be identified by their assigned identification number. Employees not assigned an identification number and assigned the use of an agency vehicle will be identified by the agency identification number assigned to the vehicle.

C. MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES

1. Whenever a Patrol vehicle is being operated by a member and is equipped with a Patrol radio, the member shall ensure that the radio is operational and shall monitor the designated talk group.
2. Members shall notify their assigned regional communications center when they begin and end their tour of duty, as well as any other time they exit the Patrol vehicle for other than routine traffic operations, giving their out-of-service location. Communications personnel shall log all information into the CAD. Members engaged in field assignments shall have constant access to radio communications through mobile radios, portable radios, vehicular repeater (extender) systems or other methods that ensure immediate voice contact. Members shall not exit their vehicle without carrying a portable radio on their person, operational, and in the appropriate holder as well as having the vehicular repeater switch on.
3. Certain Patrol members are issued pagers or cell phones enabling them to be contacted when they are away from the radio. Current pagers and cellular telephone numbers shall be maintained in the CAD system.
4. Employees shall listen to ensure the channel is clear before transmitting, and should wait approximately 15 to 30 seconds between each attempt to contact a mobile unit or base station unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
5. At the start of a transmission or a series of transmissions, personnel

using SLERS shall properly identify themselves, then the Regional Communications Center, person or agency being called, i.e.: trooper identification number 309 calling Tallahassee would say, (309 Tallahassee). All units shall respond with their location when called by a communications center except when stating the location would jeopardize the safety of the employee or the success of the assignment being conducted. Other agencies will use their Joint Task Force (JTF) approved agency designator before their radio identification number for proper identification of unit.

6. Radio communications shall be brief and to the point. Comments added as an expression of courtesy, such as please, thank you or you're welcome, etc., shall not be used. Personal communications are prohibited.
7. Units shall advise their assigned Regional Communications Center of changes in their in-service status as soon as practical. Dispatch consoles and mobile units shall be alert to radio traffic within their area of responsibility. All employees shall monitor radio traffic on all assigned talk groups and will, when necessary or directed to do so, hold radio traffic to a minimum. Communications personnel shall record in the CAD all changes of the status of members when out of service and assigned incident or crash assignments.
8. Members who believe they are stopping a suspicious person or vehicle shall notify the communications center of the following:
 - a. Exact location.
 - b. Complete description of vehicle and/or person.
 - c. License number, including the state, on vehicle, if available.
 - d. Reason for stop.
 - e. The member shall immediately notify the regional communications center when completed with stop.
 - f. If no contact has been made by the member within three minutes, the communications personnel shall attempt contact with the member originating the stop. The member's welfare shall be checked every five minutes until the traffic stop is cleared.
 - g. If in the event that two attempts to re-contact the member have failed, the communications personnel shall dispatch the nearest patrol unit to the location of the stop and notify the on-duty/on-call sworn supervisor.
 - h. If no patrol unit is available, the communications personnel shall contact the nearest sheriff's office by telephone, Inter-City, Florida Interoperability Network (FIN), or Mutual Aid Radio for assistance.

- i. All information concerning traffic stops and all welfare checks shall be appropriately logged into the CAD system.
- E. MULTIPLE MEMBER/SUPERVISORY RESPONSE - There are certain incidents when it shall be necessary to assign multiple members, including supervisory personnel.
 - 1. When available, two or more members should be assigned to:
 - a. Arrests of felons, violent misdemeanants, or contacts involving combative subjects.
 - b. Serious injury or fatal crashes.
 - c. Crimes in progress and scenes of major criminal offenses.
 - d. Natural and manmade disasters.
 - e. Hazardous material incidents.
 - f. Manhunts and roadblocks.
 - 2. If two or more members are not available, necessary assistance should be requested from other law enforcement agencies having concurrent jurisdiction in the area, if feasible.
 - 3. Sworn on-duty/on-call shift supervisors shall be notified of all, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Crashes involving:
 - (1) Fatalities.
 - (2) A school bus.
 - (3) A patrol owned or operated vehicle.
 - b. Incidents involving on-duty employees that result in an injury.
 - c. Motor vehicle pursuits (in accordance with policy).
 - d. Felony drug arrests and cash or property seizures.
 - e. Hazardous material incidents.
 - f. Manhunts.
 - g. Shootings that involve members.
 - h. Other unusual situations which require the presence of a sworn supervisor.
- F. Mutual Aid frequencies shall be used in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the FCC and the Region 9 Plan. Transmissions on

these frequencies shall be brief, using clear speech. No dispatch signals or ten-codes shall be used. Mutual Aid frequencies are not law enforcement specific and not secure channels. Mutual Aid frequencies are available to many public safety agencies including fire departments and other first responder personnel.

G. RADIO DISPATCHES- **Be On the Look Out** (BOLO)

1. Dispatches shall be used to inform units, other agencies or Regional Communication Centers of items, events or hazards that require prompt notification. Items that should be kept confidential should be dispatched by telephone, computer or other more secure method of communication.
2. Communications personnel shall consider the timeliness and importance of the items before reading a dispatch. Items of importance shall be repeated to mobile units who were out of service, unavailable or who started their tour of duty after the original dispatch was read. "Attempt to contact" dispatches will be broadcast if there is an indication that the party is in or about to enter the affected district. Items where timeliness and importance are not a factor shall be read during low volume transmission periods.

Be On the Look Out (BOLO's) should also be sent to MDC units for future reference by field units.

3. Communications personnel, when transmitting dispatches, shall consider the availability of other agencies that could be affected.
4. Only pertinent information shall be broadcast, and all dispatches shall be read using the proper format and stated as briefly as possible.
5. Questions concerning the need for dispatching certain messages shall be referred to the Duty Officer Supervisor or Shift Commander.

H. EMERGENCY POWER SOURCES

1. Each Regional Communications Center shall be equipped with an emergency generator set to start immediately in the event of commercial power failure. These generators shall produce sufficient power to keep the Regional Communications Center equipment operating so there will be no interruption of service.
2. Generators shall be checked for proper operation after the first hour of use, and each hour thereafter. Generators shall be tested on a weekly basis to ensure proper operation. Each generator should be tested under full load capacity at least once each year. Tests shall be documented on a log sheet. This log sheet shall be developed by each regional communications center and maintained for reference purposes at each location. At a minimum, the following information shall be recorded on this log.

a. Date.

- b. Time.
 - c. Oil Level.
 - d. Fuel Level.
 - e. Results (i.e., running okay, would not start, leaking oil, etc.).
3. The ultimate responsibility for the proper operation of the auxiliary power generator shall be that of the member assigned overall supervision of the communications center or his/her designee.

I. AUXILIARY BASE STATION RADIO

- 1. Each communications center shall have auxiliary radio equipment capable of transmitting and receiving to be utilized in the event of primary radio equipment failure.
- 2. All portable radio units assigned to Regional Communications Center shall be maintained in working order. Dispatch portables assigned to the Regional Communications Center shall not be removed from the communication centers for any reason other than maintenance or service. Dispatch portables are specifically programmed for dispatch use and shall not be used by field personnel.

J. RADIO REPAIRS AND MODIFICATIONS

- 1. All modifications and repairs to radio and other communications equipment shall only be performed by authorized personnel.
- 2. Communications personnel, to include but not limited to ~~Troop~~ Shift Commanders, shall be knowledgeable of the operating functions and locations of all communications equipment including radio consoles, and the auxiliary power sources.

K. RADIO TOWER LIGHT INSPECTIONS

- 1. It shall be the responsibility of the communications personnel, to include Shift Commanders working the evening and midnight shift to check the radio tower lights within the hour after sunset. Additional checks during the hours of darkness are desirable.
- 2. It shall be the responsibility of the Regional Communications Center Commander to make the necessary arrangements to have remote towers equipped with lights checked and the communications personnel advised if all lights are burning or if any lights are out.
 - a. The Law Enforcement Support Services Command shall be responsible for providing the Regional Communications Center's with a current list of towers that require light checks in their respective area of responsibility.
 - b. It shall be the responsibility of the Law Enforcement Support

Services Command to arrange for repair of any tower lights found to be inoperable.

- c. If no defects are found, the communications personnel will document the information in CAD.
- d. If defects are found, the communications personnel shall document in the CAD;
 - (1) Nature of such failure.
 - (2) Time failure was observed.
 - (3) Federal Aviation Agency notified of the tower lights not burning. Document the time and to whom the notification was made.
 - (4) Time and date tower lights repaired.
 - (5) Time notice was given to the Federal Aviation Agency that necessary repairs have been completed.
- e. The duty officer shall immediately notify the Shift Commander of the tower light failure, and the Federal Aviation Administration documenting all notifications in the CAD incident. The Shift Commander is responsible to contact the Law Enforcement Support Services Command to initiate repairs.

L. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER SECURITY

- 1. The security of each Regional Communications Center, communications personnel and its assigned equipment shall be the responsibility of the Regional Communications Center Commander. Adequate security must be provided at all facilities for property and personnel.
 - a. All entrances shall be locked. All outside lights, if manually controlled, shall be turned on during hours of darkness. All drapes, curtains and shades shall be closed during these periods.
 - b. Each facility shall be equipped with a closed circuit TV camera and/or intercom at the public entrance which shall be monitored in the regional communications center at all times. This will enable the communications personnel to have contact with visitors without permitting access to the facility.
 - c. Communications equipment and computer equipment, as well as files and messages, shall be located in a secure area not accessible to unauthorized personnel.
 - d. Any security problem at any facility shall be brought to the attention of the respective regional communications center commander through the appropriate chain of command.

- g. Areas containing computers, servers, telecommunications equipment, radio equipment, uninterrupted power supplies and emergency generators shall be restricted to authorized personnel. When necessary, Non-Division personnel may be permitted access to restricted areas containing communications equipment, provided they have approved Joint Task Force (JTF) Security Clearance or they are accompanied by a Division employee and they have a need to be in that area.
- 2. Communications equipment (i.e.: radio transmitter sheds, antennas, etc.) outside communication centers will be appropriately secured from public access when no Division personnel are on the premises. Securing will normally be done by the use of adequate fencing, locks and/or alarm systems. Additional security measures shall be taken, if needed.
- 3. Division employees shall be attentive to communications equipment and sites. All apparent unauthorized entry, access or tampering shall be investigated and appropriate action taken to safeguard Division equipment.
- 4. Only official on-duty communications personnel and on-duty members with official business which requires access to the Regional Communications Center, or a person(s) authorized by the Troop Commander, Duty Officer Supervisor, Shift Commander, or Regional Communications Center Commander, are permitted in the communications center. General public walk-in traffic is not permitted, since security of communications personnel and equipment is of the utmost importance. Signs bearing the words "Restricted Area - Authorized Personnel Only" shall be conspicuously posted at all entrances to the Regional Communication Centers. Doors to Regional Communication Centers shall be kept closed at all times.
- 5. Employees shall not loiter in Regional Communication Centers or engage in conversation or activities that disrupt the communications function.